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MAKING A PLAN FOR
YOUR FOOD GARDEN

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Extension workers in almost every State are stressing the "food garden budget" this year. By this they mean an advance plan for planting the vegetable garden that will result in plenty of food stored and canned as well as what is eaten fresh during the growing season. When the cash income is small almost the only way to assure the family of enough protective foods -- those that supply vitamins and minerals -- is to raise it yourself and preserve a definite amount of it for the fall and winter in various ways -- by canning, storing, drying, pickling, salting, or, in the case of fruits, preserving it.

Some States have published bulletins or booklets explaining the food needs of the family and showing how they can be met on farms by keeping a milk cow and chickens, planting fruit trees and berries, and having a vegetable garden. Others have issued charts that show the exact amounts of each kind of food needed per person for a day or a week, from which the amount needed for any given family throughout the year can be calculated.

In connection with the food garden the recommendation is quite generally made that two vegetables a day be used besides potatoes, and two fruits. Bulletins from the Kansas and Virginia extension services have been received recently by the U.S. Department of Agriculture, and among many suggestions they urge that the vegetables include greens or leafy vegetables about 3 times a week, and tomatoes 4 times a week. During the 16 weeks of the growing season for the average family of 4 or 5 persons 8 pounds of fresh vegetables should be used each week, and during the 36 other weeks 5 quarts of canned vegetables and some stored products such as cabbage, turnips, carrots, onions, and beets are recommended. After enjoying fresh fruits daily for about 17 weeks, many families may

have to fall back on stored fruits -- apples, for the most part -- and canned fruits -- for 35 weeks, unless they provide such a store of preserved food.

The planting chart for any given section will depend not only on the size of the family, and what grows locally, but also on climate -- the length of the summer. Vermont and Texas would obviously have very different planting needs. The Illinois extension service has prepared a particularly helpful card showing the preferred methods of preservation. The common fruits and vegetables are divided into groups according to the way they are best retained for winter use, viz:-

Tomatoes, canned in a water bath; cabbage, stored, or made into kraut; and other green leaf vegetables, canned in pressure cooker; root vegetables and onions, stored; string beans, asparagus, cauliflower, celery, canned under pressure; legumes and corn, dried or canned in steam pressure canner; potatoes and squash, stored. Of the fruits, apples can be stored, canned, dried, and made into preserves; peaches and pears can be canned, dried, and preserved; small fruits like cherries, plums, rhubarb and berries are chiefly canned.

For each of these groups of foods, the Illinois planting budget shows the amount needed per week and per year, suggests a good distribution, and gives the quantity to plant per person. The Extension Service of most State agricultural colleges can help the people of that State to plan a food garden budget suited to the climate of their locality.

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